

Ms. Withers,

I would like to recommend an extension to the comment period for the trails management program. I attended the meeting and thought that it was not well attended compared with the number of people who use the trail system around Los Alamos. So, I would also recommend at least one other meeting to include more stakeholders. Please understand that many people are on vacation this time of year and people at LANL are quite busy and may not have been able to attend the one meeting.

I would also like to state the vital importance of the trails and wild areas around Los Alamos. I have had two prospective employees decline employment at the lab with stated reasons that the cost of living is too high. I have known of other employees who moved away within the first couple of years because of similar reasons. I point out the negatives of the area during interviews to ensure employees move to the area with as much knowledge of the pros and cons as possible. And, one of the major positive points that I always point out is the trail system and the easy access to recreational opportunities. For hard-working people, this chance to easily unwind is extremely important for their long-term health and well being.

I encourage you to stress the importance of these opportunities if your trail management program is implemented. I also encourage participation of all types of stakeholders; especially horse-back riders to ensure that all uses are considered.

Sincerely,

Mel Burnett

EA Comments:

In 1980 my husband took a one-year position as a visiting scientist and we moved here as a family of four from Germany. We fell in love with Los Alamos and the seemingly endless open spaces surrounding it. We almost couldn't believe it, that we could walk out our back door and hike for hours.

Already that same year, when my husband was offered a permanent position at LANL, we bought our property in La Senda and hoped to be able to relocate as soon as possible. In 1982 we moved to Los Alamos permanently and built our dream house with a barn right on our property for our horses. We were thrilled to finally have access to endless acres of open spaces and became very active in many outdoor organizations. We eventually all became American citizens and 22 years later we still live in the same dream house, still have horses, still belong to the same riding club, ski patrol and search and rescue community. We have loved and treasured the opportunity to use the land around us and have done so with great respect. We have worked on trails maintenance, have searched for lost and injured hikers and have picked up trash others left behind. The fire of 2001 left a scar on us like on everyone else in this community. We lost so much, even though we were among the fortunate who did not lose their home. All around us we still see the burned forests and naked mountain ridges and hiking is still not quite the same. Just yesterday I returned with my clothes full of soot from a search and rescue practice. But we see the new aspens grow and rejoice over every colorful display of wildflowers.

The Pre-decisional Draft Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Los Alamos National Laboratory Trails Management Program scares me. Just the thought that someone, who does not know all of us who love and use this land so much will be able to sit in an office somewhere and make a decision that will affect our everyday lives and joy, has given me sleepless nights. I know that you will be working diligently on putting together a group of experts, who will come to a joint decision about the land around us, But will WE be heard, we, the people who live surrounded by DOE land? I urge you to include members from our community, who care about the land surrounding us into your working group and to find a plan that leaves the recreational areas surrounding us open to everyone who is willing to treat the land with the respect it deserves.

Thank you.  
Lette Birn

I believe that closing the fitness trials would be a grave mistake for the laboratory. I as well as many other employees enjoy running, hiking and biking the trials during lunch as well as before and after work. Physical exercise is a good way to unwind from stress as well as organize and process the activities of the day. Closing the trials would not only take away employees opportunity to enjoy a few minutes in the out of doors, but I believe that it would also hurt the moral and productivity of the lab. I believe that the "safety issues" that arise from the use of the trials are far out weighted by the benefit of the trials to the employees physical as well as mental health.

Thank you

Anne Chamberlin

Elizabeth,

I have attached the comment form referencing Public (Employee) Input for the trail policy. The text of my comments are also replicated below. Please let me know if further input or a different format would be useful.

Thanks,

Dave Chamberlin

Comment on Trail Policy by a Laboratory Staff Member:

The trails on public lands around Los Alamos and the National Laboratory are important to the community and to the employees of the Laboratory. All the classic explanations of the benefits of wilderness, of the natural outdoors, of individual solitude and privacy, and of physical exercise are applicable to these trails. During breaks from the workday and in the off-hours, these trails provide a relief and a refreshment for the Laboratory employees. For many of us, the availability of the outdoors is a strong reason to begin and to continue employment at this Laboratory.

These trails should remain open and available for the employees and their families. In this isolated community and workplace, features like the trails and the outdoors, the hiking and the family picnics are vital to maintaining the workforce and its physical and mental well-being.

Dear Ms. Withers,

Thank you for meeting with the public last Wednesday regarding maintaining the LANL trails. It was very encouraging to us that we are included in this new "openness" policy, unlike approximately six months ago, when all of a sudden we found Potrillo Canyon chopped to pieces, riddled with ruts, and in our opinion damaged beyond belief.

It has been pointed out before, that the LANL trails, particularly those in Potrillo and Water Canyon, are heavily used by various recreational groups. For years, the Pajarito Riding Club and individuals in White Rock have maintained and improved these trails, warned an occasional tourist not to run over the cultural sites, and, in general, safeguarded and treasured these trails, because they are very special to us. It is a refreshing thought that the lab is paying attention to its trails and is willing to maintain them.

However, I do have some concerns. Even though at the meeting on July 30 there was much information discussed and handed out, I am left with lots of uncertainties and worries, and I hope you will address these or at least take them into account.

**You may close certain trails either temporarily or permanently.**

This could mean you could close one or both canyons, thereby denying access to the various groups of people who are now using them. This would be devastating to the Los Alamos community, especially those of us in White Rock who have no other area to ride their horses unless we trailer somewhere. (The nearest place would be North Mesa, which, since the Pajarito Road closure, is now 45 minutes one way - not easy to do when you are working, especially not in winter time. Besides, everything north and east of Rendija Canyon is now off limits.) The joggers and hikers will have a hard time, too, because jogging and hiking along side the highway is not without danger.

In your report on page 36 you did express some concern about the quality of life being affected by the trail closures. I believe this concern is underestimated. Los Alamos does not have

much to offer besides recreational activities; the fire reduced hiking, riding and jogging opportunities in Los Alamos to a large extent and makes it less attractive to live here. In addition, the drought has reduced incentives to live here as well. The quality of life here will be even more reduced if the lab decides to close some of these trails, resulting in attracting fewer employees, fewer tourists and a reduction in property value. I believe these are serious impacts on our community.

An additional concern I have is that we, Los Alamos residents, are not invited to be part of the "trail team". Is it possible to have some representatives of the various "user" groups included? I am thinking of the Canine S&R group, the local hiking groups, the Pajarito Riding Club, the bike club, perhaps the Homeowners Associations.

Furthermore, I am worried that this initial "openness", which was so well displayed last Wednesday, may not last. Is there some assurance that we will be timely informed about the lab's actions on trail management?

The next issue I have is not part of the EA draft but does concern access to the trails, which are presently closed due to fire danger. Although I am fully aware of the drought and the dry conditions in the forests around us, why is it that only the lab (and not even Banderier) closed its trails, especially after all the efforts expended on making these enormous firebreaks in Potrillo Canyon and along SR 4? Is the lab saying this huge expense was in vain? At Wednesday's meeting I heard you say that after sufficient rain fall (or cooler temperatures perhaps), the trails would be re-opened. Is that a guarantee? This is important to know since some WR residents are already discussing moving elsewhere if the trails stay closed even if the drought eases off.

One more, and this is the last one: we are not necessarily privy to your budgetary plans. But, since these are our tax dollars: how much has been projected this will cost annually, and who is paying for it? How many FTEs will be devoted to trail maintenance, and what will you do if you exhaust your resources before the 10-year plan is finished? Will you then close the trails due to lack of funds?

Thanks for willing to let us express our concerns.

Sincerely,

Corry Clinton

Elizabeth:

My voice in for the 'No action' plan. This action is something which is neither wanted nor helpful. It would make a lot of people unhappy for no good reason.

Jim Cobble,

National Nuclear Security Administration  
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Comments to be considered in the Environmental Assessment (EA):

Please use other side if necessary.

If LANL/DOE/NNSA is looking to further decrease the moral of this Laboratory and the community that supports it, by all means shut down the trails on DOE land permanently. I understand that the DOE is not tasked with supporting recreation, but sixty years of history has preceded this EA that allows recreational usage on many DOE sites in the Los Alamos area. Please don't take these away. There are no other DOE facilities that have a land situations quite the same as LANL, so a comparison is hard to come by. I realize that a middle of the road option to create a trails committee to review the trails on a case-by-case basis might also be created. There was mention of allowing invited guests onto DOE trails and that these requests would need to go through the committee. I worry that this would be a bureaucratic board that would be slow to react and wouldn't help protect our environmental, historical, or our security assets anyway. I would be in support of no action.

If you would like a response please provide your name and a mailing address:

Mark Van Eeckhout

Comments to be considered in the Environmental Assessment (EA):

Please use other side if necessary.

These trails have been used for many years and I often hike some of the public trails on the DOE land. One of the reasons I live and work in LA and provide supporting services to many of the LANL employees is because of the quality of life and these trails are certainly a major part of that quality.

Bob Ellenberg

I would like to draw attention to the benefits of trail use to the mental and physical well being of the lab workers who use these trails. I also believe the trail use to be a big draw for hiring new staff.

Frame(

Kate Frame

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed closure of LANL/DOE lands to use by laboratory employees and the public.

Sitting in splendid isolation on a mesatop in Northern New Mexico, Los Alamos does not offer many of the amenities provided by other research and academic institutions: a range of cultural opportunities, restaurants, shopping (even for some basics), convenient access to major airports, etc. etc.... What makes up for all of the inconvenience is easy access and a tight connection to the natural environment.

In spite of the recent assaults on the landscape by fire and pestilence, the vast majority of people in Los Alamos still treasure their access to the mountains and the mesas and the canyons. By eliminating access to a big chunk of the land in the county you will eliminate one of the major features that brings people to Los Alamos, and that persuades them to stay.

John S. George, PhD

The trails on Los Alamos National Laboratory property should be valued for the benefits of trail use for the mental and physical well-being of lab workers and/or members of the public who use these trails. This priority should rank near the same level as the other priorities with regard to public safety, operational security, and the protection of sensitive natural and cultural resources.

If you would like a response please provide your name and a mailing address:

Jeffrey M. Hoffman

**Please use other side if necessary. There seems to be an effort to ignore the people that live in the county and most often use the trails. This could have a drastically negative effect between the town and laboratory and Pueblo Indians. Many of us who live here do so because we enjoy the environment we live in.**

If you would like a response please provide your name and a mailing address:

Don Gettemy

Please consider my comments. It seems the "No Action" alternative was ruled out when the decision to write an EA was made and I certainly hope that it is obvious that closing the trails would be a terrible decision. My main concern is the implementation of the management program. My comments argue against closing the trails and apply to the program implementation as well.

Recreational use of the LANL trails is a significant benefit to the physical and mental health of the users.

Trail closures will push users to the roadways which are considerably more dangerous than the existing trails.

The trails I access from TA-3 were all very stable and in very good condition prior to the fire when firebreaks were constructed and the tree thinning which followed.

I use the trails to get away from the roads and sidewalks. It is not at all desirable to have wide, well paved trails everywhere. The trails are attractive because they offer more of a challenge, more stimulation than the sidewalks, roads, or paved bike paths. Trail users must accept a certain amount of risk due to uneven surfaces and poor footing in places. Trail maintenance should be aimed at erosion control only.

I have not personally had any experiences which would indicate a need to restrict trails to specific groups (hikers, runners, horses, bikes, etc.) although motorized vehicles would be a danger to the rest.

I am concerned that when the time comes, trails will be closed for extended periods or permanently due to the lack of funds for maintenance. Every effort should be made to keep a trail open in the absence of a compelling reason to close it.

Please keep our trails open.

Thank you,  
Duncan  
Duncan L. Hammon

TO: Elizabeth Withers

SUBJECT: Environmental Assessment for a LANL Trails Management Program

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Predecisional Draft of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for a proposed Trails Management Program. I find this a rather strange document to have been issued. One would presume that the necessity for such a plan would be implicit, if not directly stated, under the National Environmental Research Park or National Environmental Policy Acts. It would seem that the effort would have been better spent on a trails program itself. Presuming some bureaucratic need for this EA, please note as a public comment that I feel a Trails Management Program is an essential component of any land management agency and long overdue at LANL.

Here are my comments on the EA itself.

TRAIL USERS: A program of this type typically focuses on the users, listing the benefits of the plan to users and at least implying intent to adapt the program to welcome more use of the resulting trail system. The usual benefits of more exercise for a sedentary population and an effort to encourage non-motorized transportation are standard rationales for a Trails Management Program. I find it incomprehensible that NNSA would even consider a Trails Closure Alternative! At LANL, trail use is a major component of employee stress management strategies.

I can find no reference in this document that user benefits will be an important factor in this proposed plan. Although the purpose of an environmental assessment should focus on the environmental concerns, the ultimate benefit (or detriment) is to trail users. The prevailing tone

of this EA is that users are a nuisance that must be managed as an objective of the proposed program.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: Intent for public involvement is mentioned throughout the document. I feel that the issue can not be stressed enough. I feel the recent thinning operation in Potrillo Canyon is an object lesson of the consequences of poor public involvement. The Pajarito Acres people were left frustrated by the inability to even locate a LANL contact and the grudging and unsatisfactory communication following contact. One presumes it could not have been pleasant for LANL managers and could have been easily handled with some minimal public outreach.

I could not attend the July 30 public meeting; instead, I attended a presentation by the Risk Reduction and Environmental Stewardship (RRES) Division on their proposed public involvement plan. The RRES plan appears to be a sincere effort to determine public perception and preferences concerning waste management and environmental remediation at LANL. The division leader attended the meeting. The RRES plan appears to have the potential to be effective; your proposed plan would do well to partner with the RRES plan in those areas having hazardous waste sites, as mentioned as a rationale for your Preferred Alternative.

I was a member of the ad hoc committee that drafted the original Trails Management Plan for Los Alamos County and subsequently served on the Trails and Pathways Subcommittee of the Parks and Recreation Board. We held several public meetings on the plan and on subsequent actions undertaken under auspices of the county plan. It was not enough, as judged by subsequent confrontations, threats, and vandalism. Your plan would be well advised to specifically specify for each trail action local informational meetings that included truly listening to the audience.

A colleague and I recently completed documenting homestead roads and trails in Los Alamos County, including some on DOE property not previously assessed by LANL's environmental group. We nominated ten trails for the State and National Registers of Historic Places, include two on DOE property scheduled for transfer. In the course of our interactions with LANL personnel, we felt that the lab does not have good documentation on historic roads and trails. I note in your social trails table on page 11 of the EA mention of Dead Man Crossing in Los Alamos Canyon, apparently disregarding the fact that the southern part of that route was access to the Duran Homestead, patented in 1904, that TA 3 now occupies. We feel that these old homestead roads are important features of the past that LANL should give priority to protecting. These old roads also make excellent trails and should be included in a trails management program.

I note that on pages 6 and 39, you mention "non-DOE issued guidebooks." As a presumed author of some of these documents, let me merely say that, after reasonable search, we couldn't find anyone to ask. Presumably, a Trails Management program would alleviate that problem.

During my 23 years of employment at LANL, I sincerely had come to believe that the reason many LANL employees remain at the lab through all the wrenching turmoil is that they love the environment here. The lab can inadvertently either capitalize or destroy that asset. At relatively little cost, LANL can enhance that amenity with a well crafted Trails Management Program.

Dorothy Hoard

Nowhere in the draft EA is the issue addressed as to the consequences to the physical and mental well being of the LAB workers to closure of trails. The benefits to the metal and physical health of the LAB workers far outweigh the other issues mentioned in the report. This is not a stated goal or objective of the study. This should be central to any decision. Many of the major stake holder groups, such as the Los Alamos Mountaineers and the Tuff riders were not asked to partake in this study. Employees at all levels and in all TA's should be asked to comment on such a far reaching decision that impacts their daily lives. The trails around the lab are one of the prime reasons people choose to work at Los Alamos. This EA needs to be revised to reflect the impacts to the existing trail users and the impacts on their lives if trails are shut down. There are many unanswered questions like: 1) How many daily users are there on each trail? 2) If they instead chose to walk and bike on the roads, what are the odds of them getting hit by a car (cyclists have been killed biking the roads within DOE property)? 3) What is the increased risk of heart and cancer disease from people not having a place to hike at noon? These are not trivial issues. They are very important to a large segment of the DOE workforce.

If you would like a response please provide your name and a mailing address:

Chris Horley

Please don't close LANL property to public access. The area in and around the lab is a HUGE asset to all of northern New Mexico. It's hard to find a safe a beautiful place to hike. PLEASE, PLEASE KEEP IT OPEN. Sincerely, Starr Johnson

Hi Elizabeth,

Alternative 1 is regressionary. While anti-terrorist sentiment is strong, it is in the end counterproductive to penalize workers and residents alike. Closing the trails will not provide any additional security from the determined, well-trained terrorist. Instead vigilance around sensitive buildings as is currently practiced is preferred. Hikers usually do not carry equipment, fire arms, etc. They just jog or walk and usually have females as part of the group. Thus, even cursory surveillance can sort out threatening groups from hikers and joggers (who wear almost nothing!).

Alternative 2 isn't as bad as it sounds. Trails can be repaired by volunteer work as is done in the county ( funding is seldom given to do such maintenance). Here I sense a bureaucratic tendency to be able to say we actively are involved and in control. This has not been necessary for 60 years, and (see above) is thus demonstrably not needed now.

alternative 3 looks like a strawman, unfundable option designed to drive the resulting decisions back to Alternative 1. As such it unless there is really some source of funding, it is a rhetorical artifact and nat a true option.

To me Alternative 2 is the good enough. The other two alternatives are examples of the best being the enemy of the good. The underlying logic is that, if we can't do it perfectly with explicit funding and mandate, we should close everything. Let's get real here and realize that terrorist profiles seldom include walking up Los Alamos Canyon, or up the hill beside Rt. #502.

Finally, a comment on making the Lab safe from terrorism and in general concern for environmental damage. Clearly the only way to do that would be to close the mesa entirely as in the early years of the Lab. Since no one seriously is considering this, we need to search out ways to inhibit

terrorist access that do not destroy a way of life that has been in place for half a century.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Chick Keller (Lab employee for 33 years and member of Our Common Ground, retired).

Chick and Yvonne Keller

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The importance of the LANL trails to the local community seems to be seriously underestimated in this report. These trails, many of which are remote from Laboratory operations, are extensively used for recreation by a wide spectrum of area residents, employees and non-employees alike. Some are also used for work site access, and should perhaps be counted as alternate transportation routes. While it is true the NNSA has no charge to provide public recreation, the NNSA must also recognize that as the largest landholder in the area, it must recognize that it's lands are *de facto* public lands, and manage the lands and trails that do not present security or actual safety risks (beyond those normally expected in wilderness or back country situations) accordingly. The conclusion of "slight negative socioeconomic impact" of trails closure seriously underestimates the use and importance of the local trails to the community. We are surrounded by lands that are "owned" by various governmental agencies, all of which have been closed to use by the general public. The LANL land, some of which is almost in individuals back yards, must remain open, where feasible, to use by the general public.

John Ullmann  
John Ullmann

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No consideration of the safety and health effects of closing the trails appears to have been considered. For example, forcing runners and bicyclists onto the roadways increases the likelihood of serious or fatal accidents. Conversely, the runners or bikers are forced to drive to a locale where they are allowed in the back country. Hence, more cars on the road and greater probabilities for accidents. To my knowledge, no one has died from accidents in the back country, whereas at least a couple of cyclists and a handful of motorists have died on local roadways in the last ten years or so.

A similar consideration is the resultant discouragement of exercise and the consequent effects. Numerous people walk, run or bike from their workplace into the surrounding back country for exercise and/or stress relief. Clearly, lack of exercise and pent-up stress are major predictors of serious health issues such as hypertension, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, etc. Such health issues are extremely serious. About 2/3rds of American adults are overweight and some 400,000 Americans will die of heart disease this year. A current element in getting people to exercise or simply take a walk is convenience. Currently, a large fraction of the workforce is immediately adjacent to areas where such possibilities are right outside their door. If, instead, they do not have enough time or are forced to drive to public lands to take a quiet walk or run (roadsides are not pleasant because of exhaust and noise), many people will be discouraged from pursuing the outlet they need. A thorough "epidemiological" survey would undoubtedly expose the negative implications of eliminating healthful opportunities.

Mahlon S. Wilson,

I have already submitted some comments directly to you on behalf of the membership of the search and rescue team Mountain Canine Corps. The following comments are my additional personal comments on the draft EA DOE/EA-1431.

First, I do not agree with the statements that either the Proposed Action or the Trails Closure Alternative would have a minimal effect on worker and public health. The Cerro Grande fire diminished recreational opportunities off DOE/LANL land. Closure of additional trails that results from either the Proposed Action or the Trails Closure Alternative further limits the public's ability to pursue healthy activities, such as hiking, running, rock climbing, and mountain biking. These activities provide both physical and mental health benefits and are activities encouraged by the Laboratory, especially in the face of rising health care issues. Also, given the high stress levels of most LANL workers and the lack of other recreational opportunities in Los Alamos, closure of any trails (from either alternative) will have health repercussions on the community. I have a strong objection to the closing of trails and areas that, being on Laboratory land, were being protected during the Cerro Grande fire at the expense of other areas.

Second, I do not agree with the statements made in the EA of a minimal socioeconomic impact. I am a younger staff member at the Laboratory and I would not have come here without the abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities. I feel that the work I accomplish here is not because of the Laboratory, but in spite of it. My hopes are the Laboratory will be able to reform and become a truly good place to work. But, at this point, if my recreational opportunities become more limited, I would have a hard time justifying staying at this Laboratory. I know I am not alone in these feelings.

I am also disappointed that funding is not addressed in this EA. While DOE/NNSA does not, as stated in the EA, have a "public recreational mission established by Congress", the Proposed Action will surely affect, through its workforce's reaction, LANL's ability to fulfill the missions mandated by Congress. I also believe that, without funding, forcing the Laboratory into a possibly expensive Trails Management Program with the option of trails closure is, in effect, a poorly veiled effort at closing the trails. Any trail closures would be a great disservice to this community.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments,  
Cyndi Wells  
Los Alamos resident and LANL employee

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I run on the trails on Lab property several times a week. Closing them would have a large impact on my ability to get exercise and train for races. The impact of closing these trails on the general public far outweighs any advantage to the Lab that I can imagine. The trails are **not** unsafe. This is not the same as saying they are perfectly safe, but that is an unrealistic goal and one the Lab would be stupid to aspire to.

Blake P. Wood

Dear Ms. Withers,

Please open Potrillo Canton, Water Canyon and Ancho Canyon now. It has rained and all that spring chopping of trees was to reduce the fire danger. Our horses and dogs and people who live near the canyons and use them every day are not happy walking or riding our horses on the highway.

Judy Young, Secretary of Pajarito Riding  
Club

Elizabeth,

One of the big attractions to working at LANL is the tremendous outdoor recreational opportunities provided by the natural environment. Much of this area with easy access is on DOE land. I both climb and hike on land owned by DOE. While there are certainly other areas accessible to me for my activities during most times, it is difficult to imagine being able to take walks at lunch time without being allowed access to DOE lands. This is a big attraction to working here at LANL and being denied access would remove a major incentive for working at LANL.

Thanks for accepting input on this matter.

Mark Zander



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I have read the Environmental Assessment [EA] for the Proposed LANL Trails Management Program. The EA addresses the common elements usually addressed in such reports, but does not address some important aspects related to the use of trails in and around LANL. The application of the EA process in this case is questionable, because the report does not address the impetus for considering a Trails Management Program at this time. The report makes the case that the environmental impact of any option is minimal. The real questions that should be asked and answered are not in the report. Based on this fact, the "No Action Alternative" option is the only reasonable decision.

The trails in and around LANL must be kept completely open and accessible. These trails are a major benefit of working at LANL and are used by hundreds of employees. Any student of business management or human behavior knows that providing a pleasant work place is one of the key factors in job satisfaction. The EA makes no effort to measure the impact of trail management or closure on the work environment at LANL. Closure or unneeded regulation of these trails will harm the morale of workers at LANL, make LANL an unpleasant place to work, and lead workers and the public to question the decision making ability of the NNSA and the Laboratory.

The intrusion of a "policy making" body, or a Trails Management Program on these trails is uncalled for – unwanted, unneeded and yields no added value to the environment of the laboratory. The need to make a "policy" about everything and "regulate" everything in and around LANL is not only a monumental waste of the taxpayer's dollars; it is ridiculous to any reasonable person. The Trails Management Program is a classic example of fixing something that is not broken – in fact, the trails are one of the few things that really work here – please, don't mess them up.

The Environmental Assessment on the trails did not make any sound arguments for closing or even regulating trail use. Everything is based on a perception that there "might" be some negative impact from people using the trails. I personally use the trails every day; I have never seen any unreasonable impact to the environment, or cultural elements on or near the trails. The issue of PRS problems makes no sense at all. Any real threat of exposure is controlled at a much higher level at the lab – we spend millions of dollars a year on hazard controls. The lack of a trails management program or a trails policy is not going to affect this at all.

The report consistently uses the term "Recreational use" or "social use" when talking about the trails. This term does not take into account the benefit NNSA and the LANL are gaining by having a pleasant working environment. Closing or regulating the use of the trails will lead to a stale, uninteresting laboratory campus environment that is contrary to fulfilling NNSA's and LANL's mission. Regulating, reducing or eliminating the use of trails on LANL property will reduce the quality-of-life at LANL, the NNSA and Los Alamos County in general. Is this reduction in quality-of-life in NNSA's best interest?

Government regulation of the forest caused the destructive Cerro Grande fire that ruined many of the trails surrounding LANL. Volunteers, including trail runners, mountain bikers, and hikers, have worked to restore these trails with no special "trails management programs." Many of these trails are now useable again and are being enjoyed by hundreds of responsible people.

Physical fitness is a key aspect of worker morale, reduced use of health insurance, and general job satisfaction. Reducing or eliminating the trails in and around LANL will reduce the physical fitness of employees and harm these beneficial effects. This measure is outside the purview of the EA, but is imperative to the decision-making process. The myopic view of the EA is not in keeping with responsible decision-making by the NNSA.

Finally, a common-sense issue: Will trail management or closure increase or decrease the quality of the physical environment around LANL? I propose that it will *decrease* this quality by *divesting* the workers at LANL and the people of Los Alamos County from interest in the areas now served by the trails. The EA does not address the effect of this divestiture. By placing the so-called management of these areas entirely on some special group, my personal interest in them will terminate. I am not interested in the management or the future of any area from which I am excluded. On the other hand, I take a great deal of interest in areas that I can use.

I cannot stress enough, my disappointment in the proposed management plan and the closure alternative contained in the EA. I sincerely wish we had leaders and bureaucrats that were more in-tune with what is going on at LANL and the surrounding community. Real people live and work here – we don't want our rights, benefits, or freedoms reduced – no one does.

I want to continue to use the existing trails as I have in the past. If I could vote for anything, it would be an *expansion* of the existing trail system on NNSA property. For the good of LANL and Los Alamos County, keep the LANL trails open and free of "Trails Management Programs" that create another layer of useless bureaucracy.

Jim Tingey

Poor idea, in my opinion; it would be a shame if the "alternative" were pursued.

To continue to provide employees with a sense of investment in this place at a time when the UC contract is up in the air, after the fire, and after the bashing and embarrassment the lab and its people has had to put up post-Wen Ho Lee/post-hard drives, it's important to keep and get as many lab people out in our forty-something square miles as possible.

Closing the trails would constitute a serious public relations and employee morale mistake, in my opinion.

Add to that the security importance of having random cleared eyes perusing random parts of our land on a semi-random basis (at a time when the lab would make a lovely terrorist target, in the unclassified opinion of some), and you have an abundance of reasons for not "fixing" something that not only isn't broken but also is working well.

Maco Stewart  
NIS-17

Thanks for your quick response, Elizabeth!

I guess that I'm also concerned about the "slippery slope" aspect to trail closures. For example, the no access signs appear to go up and never come down unless a letter is written to John Browne at future@lanl.gov. I still don't understand these dry condition closures recently. Is there some perception that trail runners, hikers, and mountain bikers are going to me smoking out there and starting fires. We need to let common sense prevail, and that's my whole concern with this whole trail management program. Who foots the bill for all of this anyway? It seems to me that it establishes yet another drain on LANL resources.

I think I need to take a run (up at the ski hill where I will be endangering my safety because I have to drive up there to reach the trails now that the LANL trails are closed) to calm down.

Thanks for letting us vent.

SRT

>Dear Mr. Taylor: Thank you for your comment message. We think that closing  
>all trails to recreational use would be a bad idea too - hence our proposal  
>to establish a trails management program. E. Withers  
~

My background: I am employed at LANL, coming from Germany, am now an American citizen since 1994. A major attraction in assuming a permanent job at LANL was the possibility of having horses at our property in La Senda and having access to riding and hiking trails on adjacent land. We have in past years participated in endurance rides, and the possibility of training the horses on closely located recreational areas was a very important factor. My wife and I are actively involved in search and rescue, using dogs for finding lost people. The training of the rescue dogs requires access to varying environments and open areas.

From my own experience and those of friends, I can conclude that the accessibility of recreational land adjacent to the residential areas, most of it located on LANL/DOE land, is an extremely important factor in choosing to live and work at Los Alamos. Any major restriction of that access will have a severe negative impact on

- The quality of life in Los Alamos
- The attraction to new hires to Los Alamos
- The attraction to visitors (official and non-official) and tourists
- The property value
- The efficiency of training for search and rescue teams

The proposed Trails Management Program in principle has the possibility of severely damaging existing recreational and training possibilities as well as improving upon those possibilities. The most important factor in finding solutions that are satisfying to all interested parties is the adequate representation of those parties. My particular concern is the lack of adequate representation of users of the LANL/DOE trails in the proposed Trails Assessment Working Group. This lack is not only of relevance for representation of their interests but also because the users are the most knowledgeable in the identification of existing trails and connections. I strongly urge you to include representation of such users, associated with organizations such as the Pajarito Riding Club, the Sheriff's Posse, the search and rescue organization Mountain Canine Corps, and others, as well as non-organized users.

Joachim Birn